

Spreading Microlepidoptera



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Overview

- Field Prep
- Spreading
 - Right-side-up v. up-side-down
- Acknowledgements



Spreading

- A field-pinned micro with the wings “popped” open makes them very easy to relax and spread later.



Relax first!

- Tupperware



Relaxing

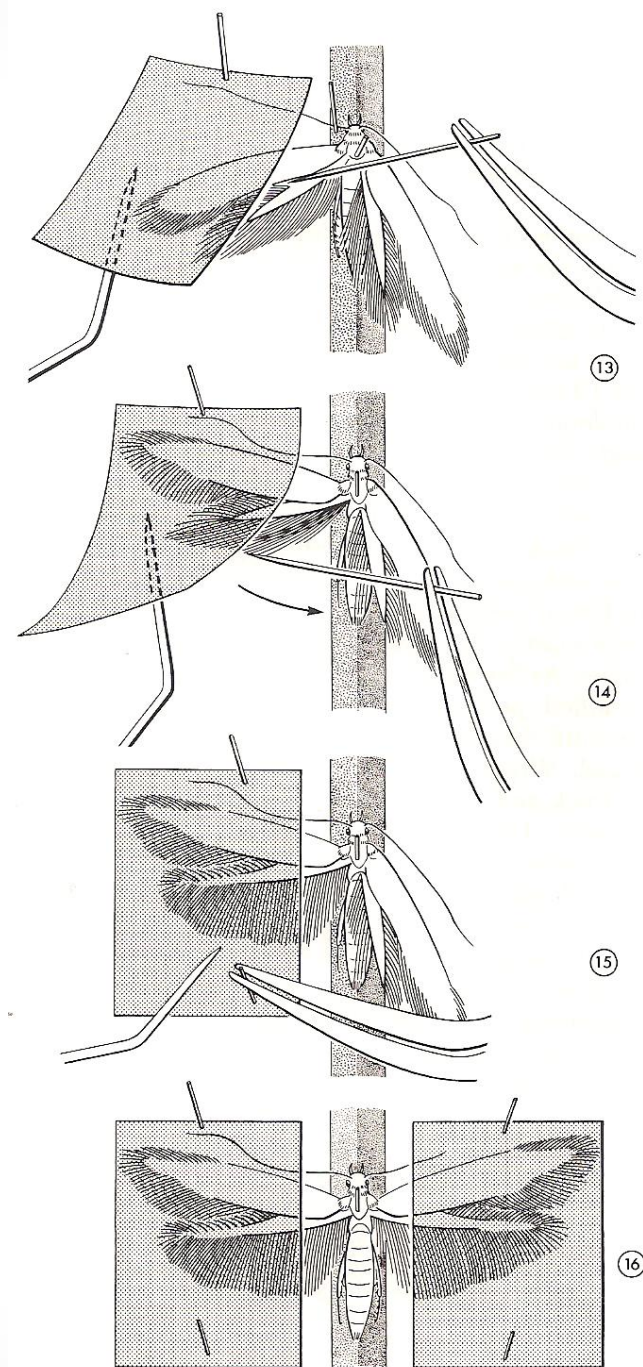
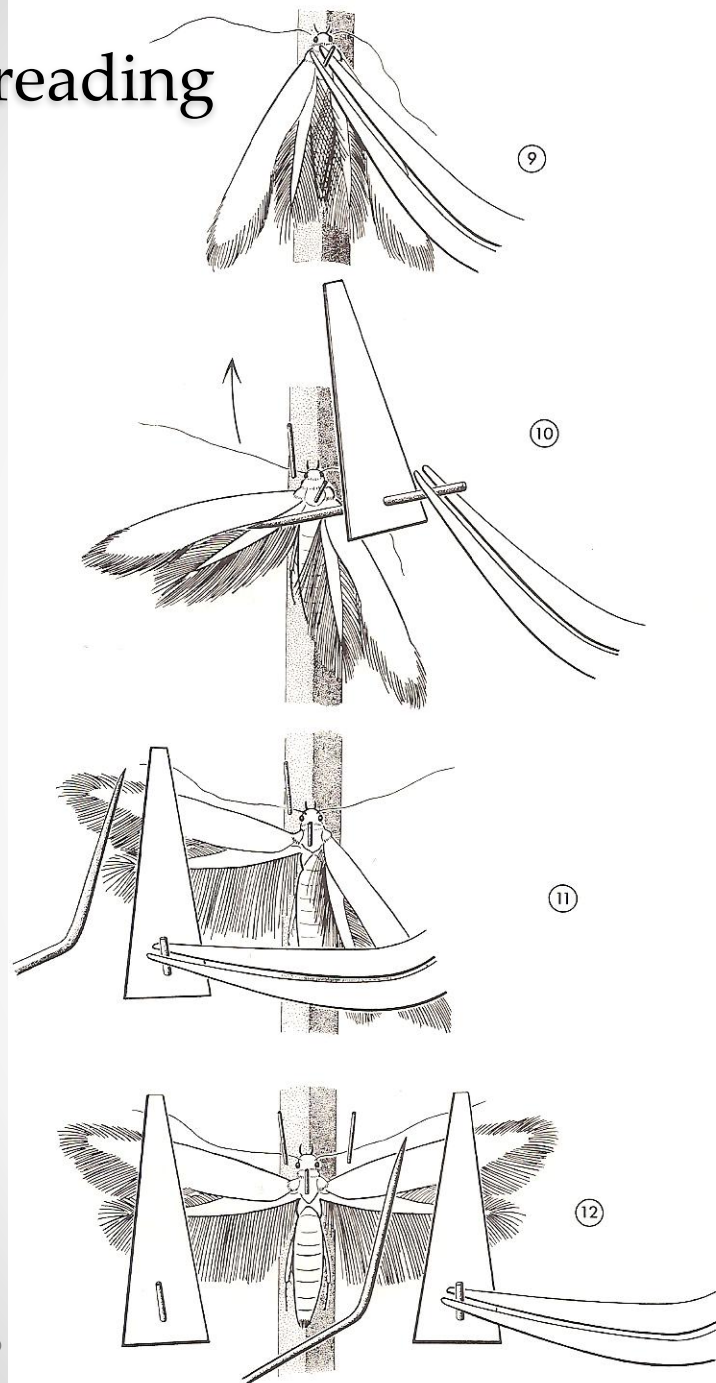
- Basics

- Just plain water, room temp, no PDB/Chlorocresol/Alcohol etc.
- Standard Gelechiidae will be relaxed in 24 hours.
- Sterilize your relaxer between use with boiling water or EtOH
- A towel on a larger relaxer will keep condensation from forming (if problematic)

Spreading

- Conventional spreading
 - More natural for most lepidopterists
 - Difficult to manipulate forewing foreword
 - Easier to poke holes
 - Creating boards is time consuming and not as easy to manipulate (small blocks/custom and expensive tiny boards)
 - Not something I do for micros!

Spreading



Spreading

- Upside-down!
 - Much easier than cutting grooves, faster than spreading a Noctuid size moth.
 - Soft foam with low static, “minicell” – closed cell and high density. Smooth finish – you can place paper over the foam to make the surface even smoother.
 - Scale loss is comparable to right-side-up spreading and you don't have to poke holes in the forewings.

Upside-Down

- Step 1 – Relaxed moth



Upside-Down

- Step 2 – “Puff” open - make sure wings easily move



Upside-Down

- Step 3 – Flip upside-down!



Upside-Down

- Step 4 – pin wings down with tracing paper



Upside-Down

- Step 5 – Lift up paper and push forewing in place



Upside-Down

- Step 5 – Repeat on other side

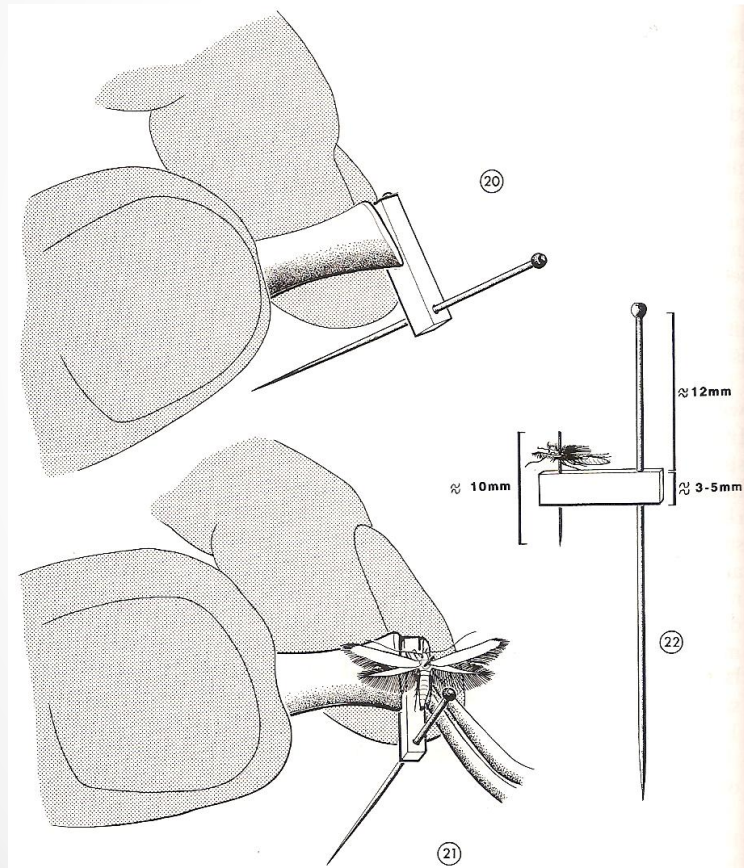


Upside-Down

- Step 6 – keep practicing



Double Mounting



Important Tips

- Not all micros will want to be relaxed and spread
 - Neptculidae/tiny ones need to be as fresh as possible (but it's not always *impossible* to relax)
- If the wings don't puff open then they aren't ready
- Keep the difficult ones as field-pinned specimens.
 - A field pinned specimen is better than no micro at all!
- Let dry for at least a week

Acknowledgements

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References

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- www.theskepticalmoth.com
- <http://mothphotographersgroup.msstate.edu>
- <http://mississippientomologicalmuseum.org.msstate.edu/ResearchTaxaPages/CactusMoths/Methodology.html>